

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 147068

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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P R 231937Z JUN 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

UNCLAS STATE 147068

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TAGS, SUBJECT & 1ST LINE 1ST PARA  
OMITTED)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP, KHADDAM, FOREIGN MINISTER (SYRIA)

SUBJECT: WHITE HOUSE PRESS BRIEFING ON KHADDAM VISIT

TEXT OF STATEMENT MADE BY WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN AFTER SYRIAN  
FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT IS GIVEN  
BELOW, WITH SELECTED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. TEXTS OF TOASTS  
EXCHANGED AT DINNER FRIDAY NIGHT AND BRIEF PUBLIC REMARKS AT  
BREAKFAST SATURDAY ALREADY FORWARDED BY USINFO.

QUOTE: THE PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM MET IN  
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PAGE 02 STATE 147068

THE OVAL OFFICE FOR 75 MINUTES. THE MEETING WAS ALSO

ATTENDED ON THE AMERICAN SIDE BY SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER, UNDER SECRETARY SISCO, AMBASSADOR RICHARD MURPHY, AND LIEUTENANT GENERAL SCOWCROFT, AND ON THE SYRIAN SIDE, IN ADDITION TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER, BY THE AMBASSADOR, SABAH KABBANI.

AS YOU KNOW, THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH MINISTER KHADDAM FOLLOWED THE MINISTER'S MEETING AND WORKING LUNCH WITH SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER. THE PRESIDENT APPRECIATED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM, AND THE OPPORTUNITY IT PROVIDED BOTH SIDES TO REVIEW THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER EXCHANGED VIEWS ON THE ROADS WHICH MIGHT BE FOLLOWED IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM TOWARD A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

THE PRESIDENT ASKED FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM TO CONVEY TO PRESIDENT ASSAD HIS CONVICTION THAT ALL PARTIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST MUST DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO AVOID STAGNATION IN THE PROCESS OF MOVING TOWARD PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND HIS DETERMINATION--THAT IS, THE PRESIDENT'S DETERMINATION--THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO HELP IN THIS PROCESS AND TO ASSURE THAT THERE IS NO STALEMENT.

WHILE THE PRINCIPAL MATTER DISCUSSED WAS THE OVERALL MIDDLE EAST SITUATION, SYRIA-UNITED STATES BILATERAL TIES WERE ALSO REVIEWED. THE PRESIDENT AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER NOTED THAT THIS WEEK MARKS THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN SYRIA AND THE UNITED STATES.

THAT WAS ON JUNE 16, 1974. THEY EXPRESSED THEIR MUTUAL PLEASURE AT THE EVOLUTION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE PRESIDENT REASSURED FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM OF THE UNITED STATES' INTEREST IN THE FURTHER EXPANSION AND DEEPENING OF TIES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

Q: RON, IS THIS THE END OF THE PRESIDENT'S REASSESSMENT  
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PAGE 03 STATE 147068

PROCEDURES THEN?

A: BOB, I THINK YOU WOULD HAVE TO SAY THAT THIS WAS ONE IN A SERIES OF CONSULTATIONS WHICH THE UNITED STATES IS HAVING WITH THE PARTIES. I EXPECT THAT THE PROCESS OF CONSULTATIONS WILL CONTINUE THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS PRIOR TO ANY DECISIONS BEING REACHED.

Q: WHAT ABOUT A TIMETABLE FOR A CONCLUSION OF THE REASSESSMENT NOW, PLEASE?

A: I DON'T HAVE ONE FOR YOU, WALT.

Q: IS THE PRESIDENT PLANNING TO MEET WITH ANY OTHER HEADS OF STATE OR HEADS OF GOVERNMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST BEFORE HE MAKES A FINAL DETERMINATION ON THE REASSESSMENT?

A: THE PROCESS OF CONSULTATIONS WILL CONTINUE THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.

Q: I UNDERSTAND THAT, BUT DOES HE PLAN TO MEET WITH ANY OF THE LEADERS.

A: I, AT THE MOMENT, DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO ANNOUNCE ALONG THAT LINE.

Q: RON, WHAT WILL MARK THE CONCLUSION OF THE REASSESSMENT?

A: WHEN THE PRESIDENT DECIDES THAT IT IS CONCLUDED.

Q: WHAT WILL HE DO WHEN IT IS CONCLUDED?

A: I THINK HE HAS INDICATED PUBLICLY THAT HE WOULD MAKE HIS CONCLUSIONS KNOWN, BUT I DON'T HAVE EITHER A TIMETABLE OR A METHOD TO TELL YOU TODAY FOR MAKING THOSE CONCLUSIONS KNOWN.

Q: DID THE PRESIDENT ASK THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT ASSAD, TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES DURING THE TALKS THIS AFTERNOON?

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 04 STATE 147068

A: I THINK THE WAY TODAY'S MEETING CAME ABOUT WAS THAT THE PRESIDENT INVITED PRESIDENT ASSAD TO SEND WHAT HE CONSIDERED TO BE AN APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE STATES, AND THAT IS HOW THE FOREIGN MINISTER CAME TO BE HERE. AT THE MOMENT, I DON'T KNOW OF ANY PLANS FOR A VISIT BY PRESIDENT ASSAD.

Q: DOES THE PRESIDENT FEEL THAT HIS DISCUSSIONS THIS AFTERNOON HAVE HASTENED PROGRESS TOWARD RESUMED NEGOTIATIONS OR MOVED US ANY CLOSER TOWARDS A NEW MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT?

A: THERE WERE NO SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS REACHED TODAY ON FUTURE COURSES OF ACTION. KISSINGER

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